

**Jim Prager**  
1330 Carroll Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90026

December 7, 2007

The Honorable Edward J. Markey (D-MA)  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Markey:

I am writing to express my support for your efforts to extend the Consumer Product Safety Act to fixed-site amusement park rides. If I can be of help in this regard, please call upon me.

I am a former senior executive, board member and stockholder in the amusement park industry and a former board member of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. I was very involved in the industry efforts to create the exception to regulation in 1981 and in the efforts to preserve the exception in 1984. I was then and I remain politically independent and generally opposed to governmental regulation. But, because in my opinion the industry does not adequately protect children--its principal customers--against the risks of its ride attractions, I now support CPSC regulation of amusement park rides.

Amusement park rides are often haphazardly conceived and designed and then engineered and manufactured by small firms with limited resources in states and in countries other than the communities where the rides are installed.

Insurance programs mandated by states or maintained by the operating amusement park companies are often touted as assuring ride safety but many of these programs have gaping holes rendering the programs essentially meaningless. Some state licensing or inspection programs were created to serve not the public but the industry, providing an illusory aura of safety.

The private equity and leverage-buy-out companies have, in their pell-mell buying and selling and roll-up of the amusement park industry, cut operating budgets and gutted professional staffs. In 1981 and again in 1984, the underlying premise was that parks would continue to employ adequate professional engineering staffs and experienced industry general managers. The cost-cutting of the last 25 years has reduced the industry capacity for safety. Amusement park companies and parks are today more likely to be run by financial wizards or sports marketing gurus than industry professionals.

The argument that fixed-site attractions have sufficient incentive to be safe because of the attendance decline potential in reaction to adverse publicity has been muted by the consolidation of the industry and the international draw of its biggest parks. The potential for adverse publicity in Kentucky did not prevent last summer's tragic accident.

Among the most poignant moments in my life are my meetings with the parents of children killed or injured in amusement parks.

I now believe I was wrong 25 years ago and that the industry should be regulated. I wish you success in your work to protect innocent and trusting young people who have every right to expect a thrilling but safe experience at America's amusement parks.

Sincerely,

